

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

NOVEMBER 2001



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Unemployment Begins Seasonal Climb

At a glance...

The unemployment rate in Northwest Wisconsin, which is not seasonally adjusted, rose to 3.8 percent in October but that is still below the State of Wisconsin unadjusted rate of 3.9 percent and the national rate of 5.0 percent. Seasonally adjusted the state and national rates were 4.5 and 5.0 percent, respectively.

Labor force estimates released by the Department of Workforce Development showed that Ashland County, which ranked 13th in the state, had the highest rate in the region with 4.7 percent unemployed and Taylor County, with the lowest regional rate of 2.7 percent, 68th. Noteworthy, because it is so unusual, is that not one of the counties in Northwest Wisconsin was among the ten highest unemployment rates in the state.

The unemployment rate increased in October because the number of unemployed in the area rose from 3,075 in September to 3,550. The increase was slightly larger than normal for October but comes on the heels of a larger-than-normal decline last month. Nine of the region's ten counties reported a rise in the number of unemployed. Only Price County reported fewer unemployed residents and this produced a drop in the unemployment rate from 3.7 percent in September to 3.6 percent in October. Price was among only six counties statewide that reported a decline in unemployment rate in October.

Twenty-six of Wisconsin's seventy-two counties had an October unemployment rate above 4.0 percent. In the Northwest that included Rusk County, with a 4.5 percent rate, Iron County, at 4.4 percent, and Burnett and Douglas counties with 4.1 percent unemployed. Thirteen counties in the state had unemployment rates of 3.0 percent or less including Taylor County at 2.7 percent. The unemployment rate in Sawyer County was 3.2 percent, in Bayfield and Price counties the rate was 3.6 percent, and in Washburn County the October unemployment rate was 3.9 percent.

A closer look...

The lowest unemployment rates of the year generally occur in September or October and in five of the last ten years the October rate was lower than in September. This year, not only did the rate increase by half a percentage point, it was the largest increase in the October rate since 1991. However, the unemployment rate in October 1991 was much higher at 6.5 percent and the number of unemployed exceeded 5,200 versus the current estimate of 3,550.

The number of residents filing claims for unemployment benefits continues to rise, however, and in the first two weeks of November jumped much faster than in more recent years. In mid-October, 1,460 residents filed claims for unemployment benefits, roughly 400 more than one year earlier. That count escalates to 2,260 by mid-November. The number of claimants normally increases as it gets colder and deer season approaches but the last increase is higher than the more typical rise of 600.

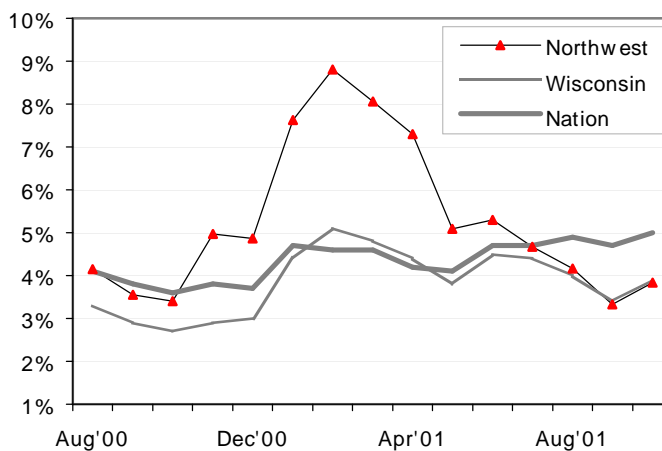
As unemployment increases the number of employed residents is declining. Total employment in the region declined from 89,320 in September to 89,130 in October but

several counties reported more workers during the month. Employment increased in Price, Iron, and Sawyer counties from the addition of wreath making jobs; and in Douglas County from employment gains in services and government as workers continued to return to jobs with post-secondary schools.

Because of the job gains in some counties, the total number of nonfarm jobs in the region increased in October. There were over 600 more jobs in the Northwest region than in September. How does the number of jobs increase even though total employed residents is

declining? Many of the additional jobs were with seasonal wreath producers and were filled by residents wanting a second job to earn extra money for holiday shopping. Residents are counted only once even though they may work more than one job.

Unemployment Rates-Not seasonally adjusted



	Aug'00	Sep'00	Oct'00	Aug'01	Sep'01	Oct'01
Northwest	4.1%	3.5%	3.4%	4.2%	3.3%	3.8%
Wisconsin	3.3%	2.9%	2.7%	4.0%	3.4%	3.9%
Nation	4.1%	3.8%	3.6%	4.9%	4.7%	5.0%

Other job increases occurred with government agencies. Nearly all of this increase is still from seasonal changes with state and local school districts. Employers from service industries reduced payroll in most counties. This was especially noticeable in the counties with higher tourism traffic and resorts, motels, golf courses and other recreation attractions laid off workers. Retail trade employment also declined during the month as the summer season ended. Nearly all of the job reduction in the region occurred from retail and wholesale trade employers. Construction employers did begin to lay off work-

ers as the main road construction season ended but other trades jobs will continue for several more weeks.

The loss of manufacturing jobs experienced in many counties in the state still had not significantly effected the Northwest in October. Statewide, it is the counties with a high ratio of manufacturing employment, especially jobs in industrial equipment that reported the higher unemployment rates. The recent lay off notices sent to local workers by some production employers were advance warnings of what will occur in the next few months.

October Data	Wisconsin	Ashland	Bayfield	Burnett	Douglas	Iron	Price	Rusk	Sawyer	Taylor	Washburn
Civilian Labor Force*	3,050,800	7,800	7,400	7,500	23,300	3,400	6,800	7,300	10,000	10,900	8,300
Employed	2,932,500	7,400	7,100	7,200	22,400	3,300	6,500	6,900	9,700	10,600	8,000
Unemployed	118,300	400	300	300	1,000	100	200	300	300	300	300
Unemployment rate(%)	3.9%	4.7%	3.6%	4.1%	4.1%	4.4%	3.6%	4.5%	3.2%	2.7%	3.9%
Total jobs, all industries**	2,862,880	8,680	4,040	4,920	19,290	2,500	6,460	6,180	7,090	9,350	6,420
Construction & Mining	136,470	400	270	310	1,180	380	310	270	360	490	320
Manufacturing	585,840	1,640	250	1,030	1,250	490	2,360	2,430	860	3,450	1,210
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	137,170	220	260	140	2,390	60	130	250	180	460	290
Wholesale Trade	137,320	180	50	50	1,150	70	230	120	120	450	130
Retail Trade	504,350	1,730	790	960	3,730	590	1,010	830	1,710	1,540	1,460
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	152,800	280	150	130	500	30	200	130	300	360	230
Services	788,530	2,360	800	770	5,640	410	1,190	780	1,610	1,480	1,350
Government	420,420	1,860	1,460	1,540	3,450	470	1,050	1,380	1,960	1,120	1,430

Change from previous month

Civilian Labor Force*	12,500	0	0	0	200	0	100	0	100	-100	0
Employed	-2,500	-100	-100	0	100	100	100	-100	0	-200	-100
Unemployed	15,100	100	100	0	200	0	-100	0	0	0	0
Unemployment rate(%)	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.2%	0.7%	0.7%	-0.2%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%
Total jobs, all industries**	7,610	10	-100	20	540	20	150	20	30	-10	-40
Construction & Mining	-1,240	0	0	-10	-30	0	-10	-10	10	-30	30
Manufacturing	-5,260	30	-10	20	10	20	180	-30	90	-10	-30
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	470	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	10	0
Wholesale Trade	-210	0	-10	0	-20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retail Trade	2,190	-20	-80	-60	-10	-10	0	0	-90	-30	-50
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	340	0	0	-10	20	0	-10	0	0	10	0
Services	-2,800	-90	-60	0	420	10	-10	10	10	-10	-80
Government	14,120	100	70	70	120	10	0	40	20	50	100

Change from one year ago

Civilian Labor Force*	79,000	-100	-100	300	300	200	0	200	400	200	200
Employed	42,400	-100	-100	200	200	200	-100	100	500	200	200
Unemployed	36,600	0	0	100	300	0	-100	0	0	0	0
Unemployment rate(%)	1.1%	0.2%	-0.2%	1.8%	0.9%	1.3%	-0.5%	0.4%	-0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Total jobs, all industries**	-3,690	-340	110	80	680	90	-100	20	270	70	50
Construction & Mining	-2,040	-80	10	20	40	20	40	20	0	-40	20
Manufacturing	-29,820	-10	10	-20	-110	30	-180	-10	-30	-30	-50
Transportation & Pbl.Util.	-50	0	0	-10	240	0	0	-10	10	20	-10
Wholesale Trade	-2,850	0	-20	-10	90	10	20	0	-10	0	0
Retail Trade	1,690	40	10	50	50	10	30	10	50	30	30
Finance,Ins,Real Estate	3,450	10	10	20	0	0	0	0	10	10	0
Services	13,690	-40	-10	-80	350	-30	20	-60	130	20	50
Government	12,250	-250	100	110	10	50	-30	70	110	50	20

* Includes participants residing in area. ** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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